

INDEXA



Winter 1996

Issue 34

A non-profit organization for the enhancement of amateur radio, worldwide peace, and friendship
Daily Information Session—14.236 @ 23:30Z

Back to the scene of the crime

Journey to SMOM—IA0KM '95 *by Paolo Cortese, I2UIY/N7PMC*

Resting atop one of Rome's seven famous hills is an old villa called "Villa Malta."

Another old building sits upon a well-known street, via Condetti.

These two "territories" represent the entire Sovereign Military Order of Malta.

I estimate that, together, they occupy no more than 10,000 square meters.

The grounds of Villa Malta include a smaller building, suggestive of a church, surrounded by a garden of colorful flower beds, tall trees, finely-shaped hedges, a glasshouse, and old marble busts. Red fish swim serenely in fountain pools.

Tourists are not allowed inside but if they peep through the keyhole of the main entrance, they see a 350-400 ft. passage, bordered by a 20-ft. hedge. This natural tunnel directs the eyes to the main cupola of Saint Peter's Cathedral on the opposite side of the Tevere River. From that keyhole one can see three countries: 1A, I, and HV!

This tiny country, located in the heart of Rome, issues passports, mints coins, has its own license plates, and maintains diplomatic relations with over fifty countries.

The Order, headed by the Grand Master, is structured as a pyramidal society. Its members are nobility: dukes, princes, counts, earls, mar-

quises, barons, and more fancy titles that seem to have leaped out of famous, nineteenth century operettas.

Don't disturb the quiet! This meant no tall towers, no visible antennas, no noise, no big power (approximately nine alarms within the villa dislike 40m RF!), nothing!

The bosses in 1994 were satisfied with our performance so the route was open for our return. And, we could even choose our 1995 operating dates!

1995 operating objectives

Those requiring IA0KM as an all-time new one were less than 1994 but several areas still needed us badly. Requests were also high for multiple-band QSOs, CW, and low band activity, so we activated in winter when low band conditions are better. We chose to begin on December 8 and we kept the stations on the air for over a week.

Antennas

Our antenna site was a gravel alley, about 12-ft. wide, located between a hedge and a wall, both 20-ft. high. The location made our 3-element tribander useless.

1994 reduced the need for 20, 15, and 10 meters; and propagation was poor in '95, so we decided to use two Cushcraft R7s and a Gap Voyager DX. The verticals were raised about 20-meters apart and performed well on all bands.

continued on page 2...

IA0KM—December 8-17, 1995

QSO percentages by continent		QSOs by band		QSOs by mode	
Europe	63.2	10m	9	SSB	8,134
		12m	7	CW	9,784
North America	24.9	15m	67	RTTY	406
		17m	1,566	SAT	534
Asia	10.6	20m	3,184		
		30m	1,641		
Africa	0.5	40m	5,418		
		80m	5,946		
South America	0.4	160m	1,198		
Oceania	0.4				

IA0KM met its goal of 19,000 (+ or -) QSOs.

The Order's businesses are devoted to providing massive hospitaler help to needy people around the world. They build and administer hospitals in third and fourth world countries and they're always on the front line where help is needed.

Paving the way

Amateur radio was not a major concern of the Order so getting the license for our first operation in 1994 was difficult. It took over one-and-a-half years of diplomatic effort by IK0FVC.

The Order's one requirement?

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Kermadec Island DXpedition
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New Life Members
Extra Help
INDEXA Election Results

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Operators

The crew was basically the same as the year before:

- the "Romans"—10CUT, 10HCJ, 10JBL, and 10FVC;
- the "Nordics"—12UIY and 12VXJ; and,
- the "Guests"—IT9ESZ (YL) and ON1AIG.

IT9ESZ was present to meet requests for a YL operation and ON1AIG met the need for serious satellite activity.

We think this was the first YL and satellite (VHF/UHF) operation from IA0KM.

10JBL provided limited RTTY activity due to poor conditions on 20m.

Operating equipment

The three stations were equipped with:

- a TS940/TL922,
- an IC765/SB200,
- and a TS850/Henry 3K.
- RTTY was provided with a PK232.

We logged with three laptop computers. Software was CT7 by K1EA and RTTY by WF1B.

Analyses

We logged twice as many JA stations as the previous operation and many JA and USA stations are in our log for six bands.

We also made many more CW contacts, especially on the low bands where signals were great from both the USA and JA. Here is the breakdown:

Area	40	80	160
JA	386	373	16
WVE	1,287	1,416	104

It was easy working the USA on 75/80m but it was difficult running JAs, probably because our signal was not loud enough. They were very loud except on 75m where there was a wall of RF—only a few were easy to read.

On CW things went much better and we maintained high QSO rates operating QRQ.

There was less DX activity on 40m SSB, especially with the USA, because working split took a lot of time without reasonable results. CW brought more QSOs and a lot of W6s/7s were logged

on 40m CW. As usual, there were few Oceania stations, though some are in our 40/80m logs. We logged a total of 145 countries.

We were amazed at the ease of operating the pile-up, even with a simple vertical. The INDEXA guys called on 75m, asking if we were *really* using the GAP vertical they supplied. They said we were loud. Our response, "Of course we are. You are, too!" All antennas and gears worked well without any failure.

Pesky operating experiences

During our operation we had several amusing episodes.

- 24 MHz—A K5 station called on two bands asking us to pay more attention to stations west of the Mississippi. We told him we logged only 7 QSOs with very weak EA stations. How could we listen to K5s? Our friend was undeterred and continued to ask us to listen to K5s on 12m.
- 10m—Ten was terrible. We made 9 QSOs during the ARRL 10-Meter Contest and never heard another soul; yet, someone continued to ask, "...Ok, when are you *usually* on 10m?" After the fourth or fifth request in ten minutes, our answer was, "Try at 0200." (At this time, the band is closed, even at sunspot peak.) So, the guy was happy and asked, "...Ok, 0200, but UTC or local?"
- 160m—Europeans are allowed only 20 kHz on 160m and signals were very loud, but one European insistently asked which frequency we were going to be on.
- "What is your QSL route?" It's amazing how many people break the QSO rhythm to ask this question, especially with the abundance of packet clusters, DX bulletins, magazines, and our announcements.

Need a QSL card?

We believe the operation was a success because we worked all our targets. Anyone needing confirmation should QSL to **IK0FVC** who will answer all cards, direct or via the Bureau.

Danger exists everywhere

Every DXpedition has a unique adventure—the icy winds of Peter I, the rough surf of Howland, or the troublesome crabs of Clipperton. The dangerous rung-ladder of Navassa chills our spines.

We parked our cars thirty meters from the "border" so what story can we offer to stir the memories of future expeditioners? How about a bomb scare?

About three days before the end of our effort, it started snowing between Bologna and Florence, right where the highway crosses the mountains. Due to some repairs, the highway was closed and Italy was cut in half. 12VXJ and I were tired of eating pizza twice a day and sleeping on dirty, old, camp folding beds. We wanted to get home without further delay.

After a while, the snow stopped but the newspaper gave us another surprise. Someone discovered a large, unexploded, WWII airplane bomb. And where was the bomb? Near the highway! So, on Sunday, December 17—the end of the operation and our day to drive home—the Army closed the road to unprime the bomb. We made it home that day after driving 200 extra kilometers in order to circumvent the bomb area!

Credits

Before I quit, I want to thank those who helped us complete our successful adventure. Thanks to **INDEXA** and the NCDXF for supplying the GAP vertical and R7; and 12MQP for the second R7. A special thanks to W4WMQ, W6OAT, N4ZC, and DF3CB for their precious cooperation.

Thanks everybody. We enjoyed it. How about you?

Pratas and Scarborough Reef Two new countries

In case you haven't noticed, we now have two new countries to provide us with an excuse to stay up all night or take vacation days to work a new one. If you weren't one of the lucky ones who worked North Korea (P5) during the very short time it was on the air, you may need to work three new ones. With poor band conditions, you might have a long wait.

North Korea is expected to appear again this year. It was approved some time back so if you hear it, work it.

The latest two new ones are Scarborough Reef (BS7H) and Pratas Island (BV9P).

BS7H

If your only contact with Scarborough Reef was during the 1994 trips, you have a nice SWL card because it doesn't count for DXCC. The first accredited operation took place in April, 1995. If you

it to send a card for the approved operation, don't submit it until after April 1, 1996.

BV9P

Pratas is a different ball game. We don't have to deal with a battle of "is it, or is it not" a country; however, there's a catch to this one, too.

The original cards that were sent out will not be accepted. Why? Because of QSLing irregularities. The original cards had a picture on them.

If you worked this DXpedition and need a "good" QSL, send your request to KU9C for a new version.

You ask, why get a card twice? The reason is to avoid bad ethics and assure that only those who made a true, two-way contact be given DXCC credit. Like BS7H, this card can't be submitted to the ARRL until after April 1, 1996.

Committee plans for the future

A committee will study the DXCC program, looking for ways to make it more understandable. They hope to eliminate loopholes and find "plain jish" answers to questions such as, "What is a country?"

We do thank those involved for devoting time and effort to protecting the ethics of our DXCC Awards Program.

Assistance needed...

Kermadec Island DXpedition

The DX Bulletin, by Chod Harris, has Kermadec Island ranked at #3 for Europe, with a lower ranking for the rest of us.

ZL2HU, with the help of WA3YVN (for support), has it lined up very well.

Operating plans

Six operators will operate 24-hours a day for about eleven days.

They have permission to stay on the island 24-hours a day, thereby avoiding the past rule of leaving the island at nightfall. This will be a plus for all concerned.

All the proper paperwork is in hand and the proposed start date is 4 May until about 14 May, 1996.

The band conditions may not be the best but they will have antennas for all bands. If you need it, it can be worked.

Expenses

The operators will cover 33% of the total expense and they really need your help on the remaining.

You may send funds direct to:

SGI Expeditions—Kermadec Project
P. O. Box 2235
Melbourne, FL 32902-2235
U.S.A.

Please include your call on any donations. (ed. note: This is Al Hernandez', WA3YVN, address.)

QSL route

The QSL route is via:

Ken Holdom, ZL2HU
31 St. Johns Terrace
Tawa
Wellington 6006
New Zealand

Thanks in advance.

VU2 QSL advice

from Z. R. Kabraji, VU2DK

Beware of postal problems when sending QSL requests to the VU2 area. All foreign mail is pilfered and tampered with by some local people.

Suggestions:

- Use only strong, well-sealed envelopes or covers.
- Nothing must be seen or felt through the envelope.
- Properly disguise contents.
- No call signs on envelope.

New Life Members.....

BV4JB,
KN6DQ

HI8LC,
AD4NM,

KB6NAN,
and

KC5HWR,
WQ7B

KF9NZ,

Extra Help Provided By.....

LA8CJ,
KP4DDB,
HI8LC,
WB8BIJ,
VE3IQ,
and,

CT1EFC,
WB2O,
KB6NAN,
N5OKV,
W7LR,
KN6DQ

DL1EAL,
W6NIZ,
KH0BX,
WT4U,
KD5ZD,

N4GYX,
WB2MWW,
K1MFZ,
EA5GNT,
KI6T,

K4FOM,
BV4JB,
K2DW,
W7WWS,
AE2N,

Thank you for supporting INDEXA!

INDEXA election results—1996

Here is the full list of INDEXA officers for 1996, including those who were on the ballot last fall.

Why aren't all officers voted upon at the same time?

Because all positions, except the operating officers, are elected to a one, two, or three-year term.

A continuation of leadership is assured by not having a total replacement of officers within the same year.

Operating Officers		Directors	Vice Directors
President	W4WMQ	LA8CJ	WA9AVN
Vice-President	K4MQG	W4MPY	CE3GN
Sec./Treasurer	W4UNP	*W4FRU	DL9SC
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		K8CH	
		VK6RU	
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		DJ9ZB	
		*Chairman	



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